Washington State Library
Lessons Learned and Future Directions Report
Executive Summary

As the Washington State Library (WSL) has worked to implement the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program in Washington state, seven ideals for action can be identified as exceptionally important to the success of the LSTA program. These ideals, extracted from the lessons learned and future directions section of this report, are:
- Planning
- Community input
- Communication
- Marketing
- Customer service
- Access to learning resources
- Partnerships and collaboration

Planning
Planning is a vital first step in any activity. Planning takes place at several levels within Washington state's LSTA program including the five-year plan, the Library Council of Washington (LCW) proposal process, and on individual projects.

Each level of planning acts as a guide to the future and involves laying out the steps and allocating available resources (staff, equipment, or fiscal) needed to achieve common goals. As planning time frames shorten, from longer range to project specific, the appropriate level of detail moves from broad to precise.

Keywords for the development of plans of all types should be focus, demonstration of progress, impact, and accountability.

Planning is important for the wise use of funds. This role is inclusive of all groups working with LSTA funding and programs, the Washington State Library Commission (WSLC), LCW, WSL staff, and other advisory committees.

Community Input
Community input is essential if plans are to have relevance.

The LCW has proven effective in advising the WSLC and the WSL staff and shaping library development in Washington. WSL needs to continue to use the LCW for library development planning and prioritization of the use federal of LSTA funding in Washington state.

Project advisory committees have proven effective in the planning, development, implementation, and oversight of various LSTA funded initiatives. These should be continued as they not only provide a vital source of expertise but also work to form more extensive partnerships with the library community and other community organizations.

The Washington State Library needs to continue to seek effective means of assessing the needs of the library community. Often times, this involves creating a balance between our need for information and that of the library community not to be overburdened with requests for information. Where appropriate, our assessment work should piggyback on that of other agencies/organizations (their surveys, etc.) to minimize impact on the library community.

It is very difficult to maintain awareness of the needs of the unserved and underserved population of the state. General consulting with library staff, trustees, and citizens is an important way to maintain awareness of these needs.

Communication
Effective communication is important among the WSL constituents, clients, and stakeholders. With the transition from LSCA to LSTA, has come the added responsibility of the WSL to increase awareness of LSTA among all libraries, to enable understanding, and to provide guidance in order to have the greatest possible impact on the citizens of Washington state.

As part of getting the message out and checking to see that it has been received and understood, WSL will continue to employ methods and technology appropriate to the various sectors of the library community, including to continue to make use of the Library Council of Washington members' connections to their constituencies.

The outcome of the careful building and maintenance of communication will be the continued growth of partnerships and effective collaboration among the members of the library community.

Marketing
Marketing is essential to build awareness, develop understandings, and create constituencies. The Washington State Library must effectively promote statewide initiatives/grants and keep the library community and the public aware of these accomplishments and their value. Both the "Washington State Library" and "IMLS" brands must be promoted in order to build constituency support and help citizens of Washington comprehend the added value that the agencies implementing these projects bring to the delivery of information statewide.

Customer Service
Customer service is crucial to any business and WSL is no exception. A client's positive experience builds the WSL reputation, increases the positive impact of marketing of the WSL services and information about LSTA programs and projects, and sets the expectation that the WSL in an important part of the state's program of service. While much consulting can be done by phone, email, videoconference, and other technological means, face-to-face contact and personalization of service is critical.

To provide effective customer service, a balance needs to be created between the need for consulting and the demands of project management. Information about LSTA programs and projects also needs to be available and convenient to access.

Access to Learning Resources
Libraries can build upon each others' efforts and the good work previously completed. There is a demonstrated need to share what is being learned from the implementation of projects, including the documentation of "best practices". Information about projects and programs must be made available in a consistent fashion. The "lessons learned" and "best practices" messages must be reinforced by repeating them and getting these messages in front of appropriate staff and decision-makers using a variety of methods.

Partnerships and Collaboration
Participation in collaboration and consortia are important ways to strengthen libraries, extend resources, and expand purchasing power.

Community partners increase the visibility of the library, knowledge of the wide variety of services available through local libraries, and make a significant impact on the community.

Partners bring new perspectives, a wider variety of expertise, increased support, and more grounding in reality. They provide project ownership, improved guidance, and increased connection with numerous people in the library's community.

Results and accomplishments related to the implementation of LSTA are detailed in the executive summary from the *Evaluation of Washington State Library's LSTA Five-Year Plan and Implementations Activities* report.